



BEARTRAP

Mike Assarly is just your average guy, he likes X-Files and does normal things. He lives in Massachusetts. Oh I forgot to mention, he plays in a fast hardcore band. That's a little less normal I guess. Oh what? They did a more than fifty day tour in Europe? That is crazy. A hundred day tour of the US? That is insane. Mike is not just your average guy, he is the main force behind BearTrap, whose songs average around thirty second long and are an aural equivalent to a kick in the teeth. He has kindly answered a batch of question for your reading pleasure. Interview by Will Butler.

MRR: Please introduce your band. How did your band form?

We are BearTrap from Stoughton, Massachusetts. I wrote four songs in my basement in the winter of 2007 and recorded a demo. Then sat around for awhile and we played our first show April 10th, 2008. Ever since I've written all the songs and had my friends come on tour with me and play them.

MRR: I feel the band is a totally different concept from other bands, can you tell me about your song writing and incorporating other bands/members playing the songs?

The songwriting process goes in many different directions. Sometimes I write lyrics and form a song around it, sometimes I write riffs and form drums/lyrics around it, and even a few times drums were the first thing written. Aside from that the member issue is just that it's easier to write and record everything myself and then find friends who want to tour and play the songs

MRR: Can you speak on the evolution of the band and where you plan on going with your sound?

When I started doing it I just wrote songs about being angry with myself. Then I started writing about other things (religion, sex, society). Musically it was really bare bones at the beginning, one or two parts per song and just straight forward; I didn't take it as seriously. Then we started touring a lot so I wrote faster songs that I liked more and got more serious lyrically. Currently we just put out a new record called Sleep Eradication and it contains the fastest BearTrap song yet.

MRR: Where do you draw your influences/what motivates you musically as a band?

Honestly I wanted to play as fast as possible. From a lyrical stand point it's anger, whether it be at myself (most of the songs) or something/one else. One new song is about an X-Files episode too.



MRR: I've noticed the anger while seeing you perform live. Where does all the anger come from? Do you feel that playing is cathartic?

I've caught a lot of shit for this before. Some people feel I don't have a good time because of how I am while my band plays or after we play. I wrote a bunch of songs about that makes me mad, so while I'm playing them of course I'm going to bring back that anger. That does not mean I am not having a good time, it feels good to get that shit off my chest. What I don't understand is people who don't get mad playing in punk or hardcore bands, or if they can just flip a switch right after the set it seems fake.

MRR: Are there any bands you aspire to be like/sound like? No, not really. I write the music I do because they're the only ones I wish someone else would write so I could lose my shit. As far as touring goes we have the "Black Flag ethic" so that sense I guess we would want to be like them.

MRR: BearTrap tours constantly, tell me about that. Any favorite? Any amazing bands you saw or played with? How touring in Europe?

I try to stay on the road as much as I can. I don't have anything keeping me home. A lot of mishaps, from being stranded in Northern California with no transmission for a week, then driving straight from San Francisco to Omaha, to being on the boarder of Greece and Turkey and getting a cop full on grab my dick like he was weighing it. We've played with tons of great bands, too many to name. On our last tour we are playing with Power Trip, Mindless, Heartless, and In The Dirt, spread across three days in Texas. As Europe goes, it was really cool. We had never been and didn't know what to expect. Some people even knew the lyrics to our songs. Of course there were bad shows too, but it was an awesome tour.

MRR: Do you notice much of a difference touring in the US compared to Europe?

There's a huge difference. In Europe everyone feeds you, in the US they don't always like that. It also seems like if you put "America" on a flyer for a Euro tour people will come to see the band. It's not the same in the US. Touring in the US is harder; it is a flooded market, so many bands tour there, especially during the summer. It also all depends on the circumstances and nothing is guaranteed on a DIY punk tour, it's always a risk.

MRR: Any good excerpts from your tour journal you'd like to share?

I'm gonna grab my dick you better make me come

How do you stay sane on such long tours? I listen and to my iPod. Doing new things and hanging out with friends around the country is way better than being in one place on my ass anyway.

MRR: I know there was a negative incident involving your band being straight edge. Tell me about that and maybe mention some positive reactions to being a straight edge band.

We aren't really a straight edge band anymore, no one broke edge or anything. I just have friends who fill in who aren't edge. If I'm considered the only real member of BearTrap then it is an edge band. In Barcelona we played a show and the band we were on tour with has a singer that X's up and I guess the crowd didn't take too kindly to that. None of us speak Spanish so for both sets it seemed like people were into us. After the show someone went up to our bassist and told him that the whole time during our set, the first band that played was mocking us and telling us we didn't belong there and to go home. So basically the first band was a bunch of weak pieces of shit, who couldn't have a civil conversation with us about our life choices, instead of mocking us. I wonder where they got this warped view that because we were straight edge and they weren't, that we were any different and 'didn't belong in the same place.' They can fuck off.

MRR: What releases do you have out or what do you have planned to release soon?

We have released a demo, a tape, and two 7"s, Fueled by Self-hate and Nailed Shut, both of which also



had tape runs and are all now out of print. We have a new record called Sleep Eradication out on To Live A Lie records. We also have a tape run of that, which is currently out now. We have a four-way split coming out in Australia soon and we will be on the 100th release compilation of To Live A Lie.

MRR: Where does the aesthetics of the artwork come from? It seems a lot different to what you would imagine a hardcore band from the Boston area to look like.

I get this a lot too. I have a friend who does a lot of our art. I have these ideas which I tell him about and then the drawings come out completely different, but I always like them. The most recent one is a concept from an X-Files episode. I like that you look at our record and can't tell what kind of band we are. You have to listen to us and figure it out on our own.

MRR: Have you come across any other BearTrap/BearTrap out there?

Yeah, a bunch, but ours is one word with capital B and T, BearTrap. We are the first to do that so the rest can fuck off.

MRR: Have any of your family members seen/heard your band? What did they think?

My dad thinks I am a Satanist. One time he found a flyer that had a picture of Anton Lavey and Marilyn Manson on it and it said "sk8in for Satin" on it because

it was at a skate park. I came upstairs and he got crazy on me saying "I saw you on the computer, you're bleeding and screaming about Satan" and "you better not be playing shows for this guy" pointing to Lavey.

MRR: Tell me what DIY means to you.

DIY isn't really doing it yourself. I've called in a lot of favors from friends, but they were all DIY so it's more Do It Together.

MRR: What are shows like in your area? Are there any new bands around there that need to be heard?

Shows in Massachusetts can be really awesome, but everyone is pretty cliquy and a lot of people have shitty attitudes, not a lot of crossover of styles. Sometimes I love it, sometimes I hate it.

MRR: How does your sound fit into the scene up there? How do people take to the brevity of songs?

It doesn't really. We can fit in just about any sub-genre of punk, but a lot of the time we play the same shows with the same bands because not a lot of people branch out of their divided scene. The only time anyone has complained about our short songs and sets was in Europe. They want you to play for so long over there.

MRR: What is your day job?

No full time job, I used to be a welder and saved a lot of money doing that. Now I do odd jobs, Craigslist shit. When I was home last I cleaned a friend's parents' house and painted it; that helped a lot. I landscape from time to time, and I always go through my shit constantly and sell most of it.

MRR: Any interests outside of music and X-Files? Movies.

MRR: With so much emphasis on music, where do you see yourself in five years? Where do you see the band heading?

I don't know where I will be tomorrow. The van could not make it there. I try not to think in the long term, maybe more records, maybe more tours. Hopefully more tours in other countries. If you read this and live in Australia, Japan, China, South America or anywhere on Earth really, book us and we will come. beartrapband@yahoo.com.

MRR: Do any of you play in any other bands? Any embarrassing past bands you'd like to mention?

I play in a shoe-gaze band called Procession (www.procession.bandcamp.com) and no, I've never been in an embarrassing band...ever.

MRR: What is in store for the future?

Besides the new records, we are going to finish this full US tour and then maybe do Australia in early 2013.

